


Lewis & Clark County
Water Quality
Protection District


FISCAL YEAR 2020
1ST QUARTER
JULY 1ST - SEPTEMBER 30TH

*Our mission is to preserve, protect and
improve water quality and quantity within
District Boundaries*




Our Values

 We strive for **competent, knowledgeable stewardship** of the environment

 We practice **transparent and accountable** service.

 We maintain a **culture of leadership, service, commitment, and integrity**

 We **collaborate** with partners, customers, and our community to preserve, protect, and improve water resources.

Goal 1



Improve the public's support for and understanding of the WQPD Mission

1.1 Provide educational opportunities to improve understanding of water issues

4

Education and outreach events partnering with other agencies or organizations

839

4th and 5th graders participated in the Water Watchers water education program

0

High school classes participating in Water Watchers water education program

0

Events hosted by the WQPD to share water-related information to the public

1.2 Provide access to clear, concise data and info on public platforms

0

Data management system and master database created

0

Mapping application created that allows public to access all WQPD collected data

2

Story maps updated, maintained and shared on social media and website

1.3 Encourage public participation across all District activities

2

Number of new likes or follows on Social Media

0

Number of engagements with social media posts

30

Number of Well-Educated Kits distributed

1.4 Coordinate and assist with the operation of the watershed groups

1

Staff member coordinates Lake Helena Watershed Group meetings and events

1

Projects or events carried out through partnership with the Lake Helena Watershed Group

312

People receiving watershed-related news through E-Newsletters

Promoting Experiential Education

A DAY AT PRICKLY PEAR CREEK



In July of 2019, the WQPD teamed up with the Montana Conservation Corps to provide a group of middle school students an opportunity to explore various aspects of the watershed. With the help of volunteers from local organizations and agencies, the students had a full day of interactive games and lessons outdoors, learning about water quality, plant and animal identification, as well as the threats and impacts that we have on our watershed. We would like to thank Janice Miller from the the Last Chance Audubon Society and Liz Burke from the U.S. Forest Service for helping us put on this great event.

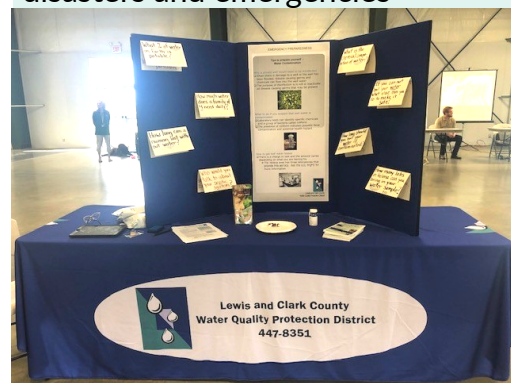
ALIVE @ 5!



The Lake Helena Watershed Group was the hosted non-profit organization at one of Downtown Helena's most popular events of the summer. Hundreds gathered to listen to music at Women's Park, and had the opportunity to play watershed trivia, explore how surface-level activities impacts groundwater, and learn about the work of the WQPD

COUNTY PREPAREDNESS FAIR

Lewis and Clark County hosted a family-preparedness fair, focusing on what you and your family can do to prepare for and survive disasters and emergencies like floods, wildfires, earthquakes, and disease epidemics. The WQPD was there to talk to attendees about water quality-related issues and well & septic maintenance, especially during times of natural disasters and emergencies



GIRLS IN STEM: STORY MAP TRAINING



A "Girls in Government" camp brought over 25 young adults interested in pursuing degrees in the STEM fields to the State Capitol's complex in September. As part of this camp, WQPD staff helped lead a training that guided participants in collecting field data, transferring data into an online map, and creating an interactive Story Map. They also discussed potential career paths, as well as the importance of developing technical skills.



WQPD Board takes tour of Sevenmile Creek Project

Building strong community partnerships and relationships is integral to the WQPD mission, and it continues to lead to new opportunities for the WQPD to improve the public's understanding of local water resources and foster a greater sense of stewardship.

In 2016, the Prickly Pear Land Trust (PPLT) acquired over 300 acres just west of Head Lane.



About 2 miles of Sevenmile Creek bisects the parcel. After the acquisition, PPLT has successfully restored most of the creek on their property. The work has already shown incredible benefit to fish and wildlife habitat, while also improving the area's ability to mitigate flooding and reduce sediment loads into the greater Lake Helena watershed. With the PPLT as the landowners, the WQPD saw this as a great opportunity not only to provide important technical assistance but also to use the property for education and outreach. The WQPD continues to monitor stream conditions, such as seasonal stream flows and aquatic insect life. The district also has helped coordinate and plan for re-vegetation efforts along vulnerable parts of the newly created channels of Sevenmile Creek.

One of the most exciting programs that has grown from this partnership is an annual monitoring event with the Carroll College Environmental Science Department, with tremendous help from Professor Travis Almquist. Not only is the monitoring building a long-term data set of important stream health indicators, but around 25 new students each year are able to see the impacts of stream restoration projects, learn techniques for monitoring them, and understand the importance of watershed health.

The WQPD will continue to provide support for and participate in PPLT's Sevenmile Creek Restoration Project. District staff look forward to expanding their educational programs through partnerships such as this one.

Goal 2



Design and implement projects that protect and improve water quality and quantity

2.1 Operate surface water and groundwater monitoring networks

159

Groundwater level measurements throughout the District, out of 480 unique wells

39

Surface water measurements at 17 unique locations

1

Sampling and analysis plans reviewed and updated for future monitoring

2.2 Identify, prioritize, and implement project opportunities

No activity for Quarter 1

2.3 Encourage public participation across all District activities

0

Number of volunteers recruited for projects

0

Number of landowners reached

2.4 Identify, prioritize and implement funding opportunities

No activity for Quarter 1

Goal 3



Inform public policies for the management of water quality and quantity

3.1 Provide issue-specific information to stakeholders and decision makers.

No activity for Quarter 1

3.2 Advocate for legislation that supports the District's activities.

5 45/ 67

No activity for Quarter 1

Goal 4



Optimize internal organizational capacity to support the District's activities

4.1 Provide technical training to staff and Board.

2

Conferences
attended by
WQPD staff

0

Trainings attended
by WQPD

4.2 Develop internal policies and procedures that enhance District operations

No activity for Quarter 1

4.3 Identify and implement Quality Improvement projects

1

Quality Improvement
projects implemented

A quick look at the stats:

The majority of public requests that the WQPD receives come from phone calls, and 30% of those phone calls were concerned with personal water quality issues. Only 7% of the calls were regarding concerns or issues over water quantity, and 23% were not categorized, spanning topics from (but not limited to): proposed gravel pits, best practices of sprinklers, and Harmful Algae Bloom information requests or advice.

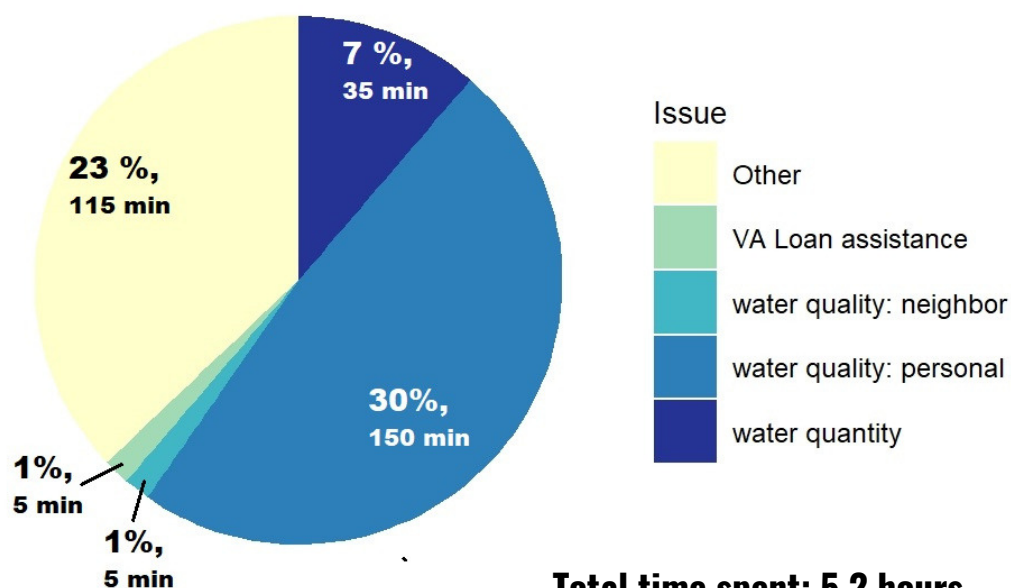
Tracking Customer Service

A quality improvement project

WQPD staff are in and out of the office frequently due to commitments to field work, attending meetings, conferences and training, or responding to public investigation requests. Often, people calling the WQPD for any number of reasons will leave messages on more than one staff member's answering machine. Tracking down whether the individual has received the service or information they were looking for can be challenging. In order to eliminate that confusion and to improve our customer service, we created an online database that tracks any public interaction (phone call, field visit, or in-person visit), and important details associated with that interaction such as: the date of interaction, what type of request was received, whether or not the request was satisfied, who resolved the request, and any additional comments.

Staff can now check the database to see whether or not the individual already received service through another staff member. Additionally, tracking this information has shed light on the amount and types of services that people are most concerned with. Through this database, we also improved our tracking of the number of well-educated kits distributed.

30 Well-Educated Kits Distributed



Total time spent: 5.2 hours

We have seen a spike in calls requesting assistance for VA loan compliance due to a new law passed in 2018. This law required that a third party must collect and transport water samples from the residence to the laboratory in order to be in compliance and to consider the water quality results valid. As of 2019, the WQPD has offered to perform this service upon request.

23 Phone Calls



Total time spent: 3.8 hours

0 Site Visits



Total time spent: 0 min

8 Walk-Ins



Total time spent: 1.3 hours